



Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

July, 1965

Vol. 33, No. 3

## LOYALTY NIGHT

St. Louis Audubon Society climaxed its Spring season with an outstanding program on Loyalty Night, May 21st. A film entitled "Valley of Oaxaca" was presented by Martin Schweig, Jr., at Third Baptist Church on that evening and was extremely well received.

The occasion also marked the annual presentation of numerous Audubon awards. These awards were made after thorough study by the Society's Awards Committee, Elizabeth Golterman, Chairman. They are as follows:

### Audubon Silver Cup

Washington, Mo., Public High School—Russell Nix, Principal  
(The cup was accepted by James Jackson, Biology Instructor,  
and his students.)

### Audubon Camp Scholarship

William Brush — \$125.00 award  
Robert Dwyer — \$125.00 award  
David A. Pierce—\$100.00 award

### One-year Membership in National and Local Audubon Societies

Robert Guenther  
Karen Peterson

### Book Awards

Priscilla Dunnam—Antonia R-IV Elementary School  
Richarlene R. Beech—Enright Middle School  
Craig Hunter—Laclede School  
John Thomas—Holy Guardian Angels School

### Special Audubon Citation

R-IV Antonia Elementary School  
and  
the Green Thumb group from that school.

## A BIRDING EXCURSION INTO MEXICO

By J. EARL COMFORT

After weeks of planning and pleasant discussion of our long contemplated bird trip into Mexico, my niece, Helen Hill, and I finally found the Hill Ford station wagon packed and ourselves on the way early on Saturday morning, October 31.

As is usually the case on extended trips, we traveled far and fast on the first day, negotiating 530 miles through Missouri into Norman, Okla., known as the Snake Pit to visiting football teams. Whooping cranes were the magnet that drew us southwestward so eagerly and so swiftly.

Bright and early on the next day we headed for that mecca of life-listing birders, the Aransas Wildlife Refuge in Texas, wintering home of the whooping crane. At Aransas headquarters a ranger naturalist told us there were 3 cranes present, but he couldn't assure us they would be in sight from the tower he advised us to climb. Before we reached the tower, however, we both exulted in a life species, a long-billed curlew, a bird we were destined to see in great numbers from the moment on while we toured their preferred and appropriate habitat. Our longbill was in the company of a Louisiana heron.

Confidently lugging our spotting scope to the top platform of the tower, I had hardly set up the scope before Helen spied the 3 whoopers through her binoculars. One was a rusty immature. Helen again spotted several cranes in flight which she located through their call notes, their extended necks separating them from similar-colored great blue herons, present in great numbers. The sandhills were a lifer for me as was the royal tern for both of us moments later.

Because the Aransas air was full of vultures we often had excellent views of the turkey species from the tower, many sailing below us at close range. We marveled at the wing motion, or lack of it, as they took advantage of their buoyancy to float through the air with the greatest of ease, sometimes seeming so motionless they appeared to be hung out to dry.

Having accomplished our mission at Aransas we headed for Mexico, stopping for the night at Corpus Christi, where we added the Inca dove. As the tide rose and ebbed we enjoyed the sound of the waves from our motel rooms as the breakers washed the shore to the accompaniment of laughing gulls, which, like the curlews, were our constant companions along all of the Gulf Coast section that was included in our itinerary.

Early the next day we crossed the Gateway Bridge into Matamoros, Mexico where we went through customs and were issued a car permit and visas. We found ourselves in a new world almost indescribable. As we headed south on Pan American Hy. 101 we encountered many push carts loaded with wares with bicycles everywhere. We hadn't gone far after we left the city limits before we found burros in profusion on the dirt roads that generally paralleled the highway on both sides. Mexicans either led the loaded beasts of burden or slowly rode them to various destinations, the human legs dangling in comical fashion. We were a bit surprised when we saw our first yoke of oxen, but this became more or less common after we left the city farther behind us, the oxen patiently pulling their wagons.

In spite of the fact we had Dick Anderson's expert advice regarding the best birding areas in Mexico and had read his excellent account of his trip with several others in the Webster Groves Nature Study's NATURE NOTES and though we more or less followed their birding route in the spring of 1964, we were less fortunate in listing lifers. However this was expected because of the season and because we covered only a small portion of their extended route. Dick's party at the outset consisted of Dick and Mitzi Anderson, Elizabeth Cole, Bertha Massie, Dorothy McIlroy and Dr. H. E. Schoen.

At Mante we contacted the English speaking hostess of the motel courts that had housed Dick's party. After securing rooms we enjoyed supper in the court's excellent restaurant.

We had been told the beautiful El Salto Falls, some distance off the main road were a must and we readily agreed with Dick's description.

Doubling back on Hy. 101 we headed in a northwesterly direction on Hy. 85 at its intersection with 101. At Monterrey, a city of 850,000, we got motel rooms and our only vermillion flycatcher of the trip. The following day found us at Laredo, Tex. where we again went through customs and surrendered our car permit and visas. My vaccination for small pox required for re entry did not take. An official confiscated an apple, the only remains of a bag of fruit we had taken into Mexico. Maybe he was a teacher.

We returned to the good old St. Louis Area by way of Corpus Christi (where we obtained the same motel rooms on the beach), Rockport, Galveston, Port Arthur, the Sabine Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, Northeastward through Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri and home, bushed, but radiating with pleasant thoughts of our busy 12 day's birding expedition.

Life birds for one or both of us (usually both) in their order of appearance were: long-billed curlew, whooping crane, sandhill crane, royal tern, Inca dove, bronzed cowbird, Harris' hawk, golden-fronted woodpecker, roadrunner, white-necked raven, white-tailed hawk, caracara, black hawk, curve-billed thrasher, Lichtenstein's oriole, hooded oriole, tropical kingbird, Kiskadee flycatcher, lined woodpecker, black-headed oriole, Bullock's oriole, black-chinned hummingbird, hepatic tanager, black swift, melodious blackbird, red-billed pigeon, pyrrholoxia, sage sparrow and seaside sparrow.

The following species, seldom or never seen in the St. Louis Area, were listed: (this list excludes the lifers mentioned above) white pelican, cattle egret, reddish egret, Louisiana heron, black vulture, Mississippi kite, Swainson's hawk, American oystercatcher, piping plover, ruddy turnstone, willet, sanderling, avocet, long-billed curlew, laughing gull, Bonaparte's gull, Franklin's gull, Sandwich tern, black skimmer, ground dove, red-shafted flicker, vermillion flycatcher, western kingbird, scissor-tail flycatcher, common raven, boat-tailed grackle and lark bunting.

Here are some random notes about our exciting birding trip:

The house sparrow was found everywhere we toured, but the starling finally ceased to show up after we entered Mexico. Some other species most prevalent in much of the country through which we traveled were sparrow hawk, turkey vulture, loggerhead shrike, mourning dove, boat tailed grackle, laughing gull, willet, black-bellied plover and mockingbird. But the prize for being the most persistent goes to the boat-tail. The turkey and black vultures were seldom seen aloft in mixed flocks, though they often occupied the same areas. The black was the less wary of the two vultures. Our one and only oystercatcher was seen at Rockport. Our only flat tire occurred on the beach at Galveston. Surprisingly, it was caused by a wooden tooth pick piercing the tough tire casing. This beach, which extends for miles, was one of our favorite birding spots in spite of the flat. We found wintering semipalmated sandpipers were so light colored we constantly tried to make a snowy plover identity. Always the longer bill of the sandpiper disappointed us. Helen, who had done extensive bird study of the species likely to be seen in Texas and Mexico, was quick on the draw and was usually the first to come up with the correct identity. She has developed into an exceptionally competent birder as well as experienced botanist. We often found the plentiful long-billed curlews feeding in dry fields rather far from water. The willets and black-bellied plovers, though numerous, were invariably seen singly. It is hard to picture a willet atop a rocky coast wall, but, wherever we found these walls we found our willets. We particularly enjoyed walking along a slippery wave-washed wall at Corpus Christi. Our only waterfowl

in Mexico was a pied-billed grebe. Mexico yielded no shorebirds. Though the Mexican roads were lined by unsightly shacks there were usually many beautiful flowers growing in the yards. We decided the many vultures were attracted by the seemingly inanimate Mexicans who sat along the highways in apparently never ending siestas. There were very few side roads, only paths leading to the homes. After we crossed into the Tropic of Cancer we found commercially grown bananas. Helen put her high school Spanish to good use in interpreting the highway signs. We decided to religiously obey all alto (stop) signs. After we found our first Harris' hawk it became one of our most abundant birds in Texas. It is indeed a beautiful bird, as is the white-tailed hawk. The Harris' was usually found in pairs. Not a drop of rain fell on us. We expected to escape some unpleasant weather by being away in November, but learned St. Louis enjoyed exceptionally pleasant weather during our absence. 'Tain't fair.

We decided Mexico is the land of bicycles, goats, thatched roofs, chickens and turkeys and "loose live stock".

## BIRD COUNT

On May 8th the annual bird count taken jointly by the St. Louis Audubon Society and the Webster Groves Nature Study Society resulted in a total of 186 species being recorded. This compared with last year's figure of 184.

The groups covered an area more than 50 square miles which assured a thorough coverage.

One of the interesting things on this count was that of the 36 species of warblers that come through Missouri on migration, some of them to remain here and nest in this area. We only missed 3 birds. Those 3 were the black throated blue warbler, the Cape May warbler, and the hooded warbler.

## TAUM SAUK NATURE MUSEUM

The Taum Sauk pumped hydro project, of the Union Electric Co. is the largest of its kind now in existence. For this reason alone and also due to its location in the rugged Ozarks near Lesterville the project has attracted many visitors. Union Electric welcomes them and has built a Visitors' Center which contains a small museum of the local geology, a working model of the pumped hydro operation, and a spacious picnic area. The project has attracted as many as 3600 visitors in one month. For the benefit of the public, they are now building a Nature Museum at the Visitors' Center and are in the process of preparing a number of displays.

The geological display will be somewhat enlarged, showing the commercially important minerals which are mined in the state. A rather large section will be devoted to the lumber resources of Missouri, and the products that are made from native woods. Another display will be devoted to the many types of clays which are mined in the state, with their use for refractories and pottery. A section will show the native birds, using mostly material from the Audubon Society. A display board will mount 112 postal cards and a push button selector system will light a small bulb above the bird whose name appears on a console. Charles Schwartz's drawings of the wild mammals of Missouri will be displayed. Ultimately, there will be a gallery of between 250-300 color print enlargements of native wildflowers. They will be shown as much as possible in chronological order of blooming. Finally, they hope to show the leaves of the most important forest trees in the state with a picture of a typical tree and pertinent information on height, life span, and habitat. The Museum is now complete. The picnic area is usable at all times.

## **ANNUAL ELECTION**

At the Loyalty Night meeting a report of the Nominating Committee, headed by Mrs. Cecil Criger, presented their nominees for officers and directors of the Society. The following were then elected:

*President*

*Earl H. Hath*

*Vice-Presidents*

*Harry G. Giessow*

*Martin Schweig, Jr.,*

*Mrs. Thelma Thalinger*

*Secretary*

*Mrs. Edmund C. Rogers*

*Treasurer*

*Joel Massie*

*Executive Secretary*

*Miss Alberta M. Bolinger*

*5079 Waterman Ave.*

*St. Louis, Mo. 63108*

*FOrest 7-1404*

*Honorary Director*

*Dr. Robert J. Terry*

*Directors*

*Wm. Glasgow Bowling*

*Louis Brenner*

*Dr. Harold A. Bulger*

*Dr. Hampton L. Carson*

*Edward G. Cherbonnier*

*Earl Comfort*

*Leo Drey*

*Elizabeth Golterman*

*Richard P. Grossenheimer*

*Leonard Hall*

*Mrs. Elinor Hayward*

*Mrs. Viola M. Holliday*

*G. Alex Hope*

*O. C. K. Hutchinson*

*Mrs. Warren B. Lammert*

*J. Marshall Magner*

*James M. Nelson*

*Mrs. Hiram Norcross, Jr.*

*Edward P. Ortleb*

*Waldemar A. Palm*

*Jay Rice*

*Dr. Mildred Trotter*

*Dr. John D. Whitney*

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## **BIRDING IN THE ST. LOUIS AREA**

By J. EARL COMFORT

Since January 1st of 1965 the St. Louis Area birding activity has produced no startling listings though there have been many rare and fairly rare species worthy of mention, the best being a sandhill crane by Steve Hanselmann in St. Charles County on March 30th. Some of the less rare finds have been common loon, horned grebe, eared grebe, cattle egret, yellow-crowned night heron, whistling swan, white-fronted goose, white-winged scoter, greater scaup, goshawk, Harlan's hawk, pigeon hawk, Virginia rail, Glaucous gull, red-breasted nuthatch, Philadelphia vireo, Cape May warbler and Smith's longspur. Our second best record was that of the eared grebe at Grand Marais State Park in East Louis on April 13th by Dick Anderson. As is the custom, Dick passed the word around by phone, resulting in its listing by Kathryn Arhos, our top feminine birder.

Connie Hath was the first to list a 1965 humming bird, her migrant appearing many days ahead of its early migrant average date.

Thanks to Sally Vasse, many pleasant trips to the Swan Lake, Calhoun County area were arranged until the April floods along the Mississippi put the ferries temporarily out of business and the lakes beyond reach because of flooded roads. White-fronted geese were welcome listings at Gilbert Lake near Swan, courtesy of Sally.

Mike Flieg has faithfully kept the Mississippi and Illinois levees below the Jefferson Barracks Bridge under surveillance, resulting in the cattle egret again making our year's list. Moredock Lake has been a disappointment because it has remained dry for more than a year. Moredock was formerly one of our best birding spots.

The 2 Audubon Shaw's Garden Saturday A.M. bird walks with chairman Tony McColl assigning assistant leaders to groups eager to check the birds during the pleasant walks were well attended. The 4 Forest Park Sunday A.M. bird hikes were in charge of Martin Schweig, with several leaders showing up for all 4 walks. Best enjoyed species at Shaw was a male Scarlet tanager spotted by Dave Pierce. Two of the Forest Park walks were held under rain-threatened conditions after early A.M. rains.

The St. Louis Audubon 3rd Saturday and last Sunday of the month Nature hikes at Shaw's Garden Arboretum remain popular, with Earl Hath a competent and patient leader.

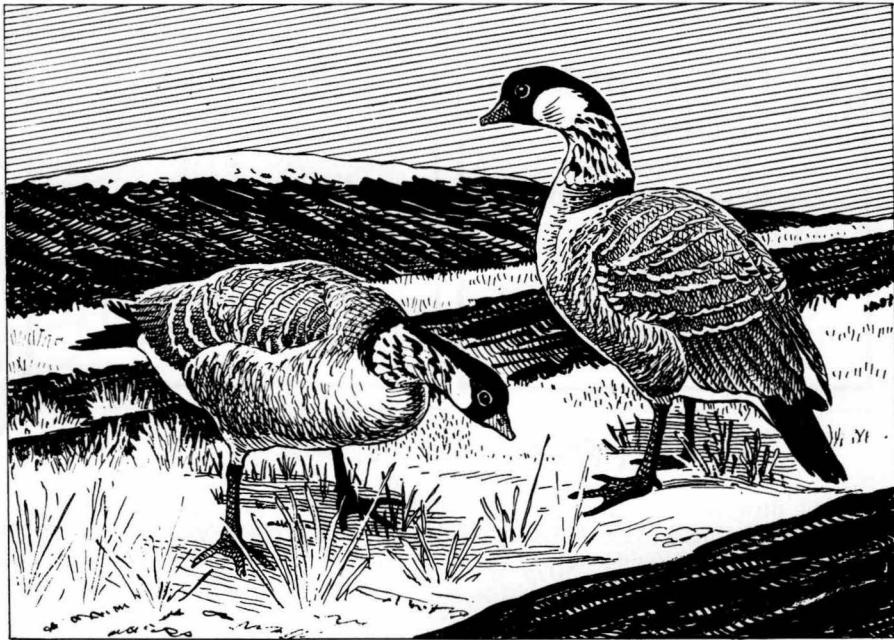
Kathryn Arhos has been a faithful leader of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, August A. Busch Wildlife Area Weldon Springs bird counts on the second Sunday of each month. Ditto for her Nature trips every Wednesday. As a result of all of these regularly scheduled trips many pleasant hours have been spent afield by those who are desirous of gaining conservation and nature knowledge as well as enjoyment of the out-doors.

The popular dawn to dusk annual St. Louis Audubon bird census (species only) was held on Saturday, May 8th, this year instead of the usual first Sunday in May. The weather man was fairly cooperative, scattered brief showers temporarily halting activities in some sections of the well-coverel area count. Earl Hath's summary of the lists showed 186 species, toping last year's total by 2 species. The fish crow found by Mike Flieg near the levees upgraded the top bird of the year, relegating the crane to a lower classification. A pine warbler adds to the list of less common species for the year. The 33 warbler species missed making a clean sweep of all the warblers listed in our new area list by only 3.

High roundup list was the 141 by Steve Hanselmann, with John Willetts in second place with 137, Dick and Mitzi Anderson turning in a team list of 135 for the long day. Dick's individual list was 132. Beulah Bedell and Frances Picel were justifiably proud of their blue grosbeak. One of the most popular species for all the fortunate listers was the bobolink. Some others with long lists were Kathryn Arhos, Alberta Bolinger, Bill Brush, Earl Comfort, Bob Dwyer, Diane Eger, Mike Flieg, Bob Guenther, Don Hays, Earl Hath, Jimmy Jackson, Winnifred Meloy, Dave Renecamp, Fred Ruesegger, Marge Self, Jack Van Benthuysen, Dorothea Vogel, and Mary Wiese. Probably there were others that, unfortunately, were unreported.

Due to an unfortunate oversight by the telephone company in not listing the St. Louis Audubon Society in the last issue of the Directory, we are listing below the night number and day number of the Society.

Night — FOrest 7-1404  
Day — MAin 1-0634



About 300 Nene geese may be found in the wild on the high lava flows of Hawaii. Former hunting, predation by introduced mammals and, to some extent, loss of habitat are blamed for decline. Nene geese are considered very rare, but their prospect for survival is considerably better than in 1948 when a restoration program started. They are shown here as they appear on Federal Duck Stamp.

## MINUTE ENGINEER

By MYA KERN PASEK

Fresh green leaves float upstream  
Water holds near weathered stick-ridge.  
Awkward branch follows, brought up-right  
And wedged into space, by rough-furred worker,  
While camera-eye watches . . .  
Trip after trip, hour follows hour  
Until all leaks are plugged.  
Then, giving in to utter fatigue,  
The animal drops to its side.  
Cast to bachelor life, after two protected years  
Male or female, doggedly seeks  
A new or forgotten site.  
Builds, toting mud in mouth.  
Blue prints missing, study unneeded,  
This engineer executes to specification.

Amazingly  
Aiding  
Wildlife  
and  
Conservation.

**EARL H. HATH**

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9912 Clayton Road

WYdown 3-2222

**ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN**

PUBLISHED BY

**ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY**

5079 Waterman Ave.

St. Louis, Mo. 63108

FOrest 7-1404

Earl H. Hath..... President  
Miss Alberta Bolinger..... Executive Secretary

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U. S. POSTAGE  
**Paid**  
**St. Louis, Mo.**  
Permit No. 5128

Mr. J. Marshall Magner  
516 Bacon  
St. Louis, Mo.  
63119